



Decision Notice

National Forests in Florida Revised Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment to designate Management Areas for recently acquired lands on the Osceola National Forest (Amendment 11)

**USDA Forest Service
National Forests in Florida
Columbia and Baker Counties, Florida**

Decision and rationale

I have decided to authorize the Management Area designation and revision of the Forest Plan standard LA-3 as described in the proposed action and Environmental Assessment.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact for this proposed action, and the analysis therein is incorporated by reference into this Decision Notice. The EA included relevant information on a range of resource areas and the delineation of MA boundaries was based on the best scientific information currently available for the area.

The need for Management Area designation is clearly linked to Forest Plan goals, objectives and standards. Continued custodial management of approximately 30,000 acres of recently acquired land would not contribute to desired conditions of forest resources and would lead to inefficient project-level MA designation. The proposed MA designation followed a logical process to identify appropriate Management Areas, while recognizing that both changing conditions and changing management objectives may result in future MA changes. The revision of LA-3 will help connect our active land acquisition program in the Pinhook purchase unit and the urgent need for management of those new acquisitions.

I have also considered comments received from the public, which have been filed in the project record. The public involvement process for this project is available in the EA, which is on the public website (<http://goo.gl/aWX8O>) or is available upon request.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

The decision to designate Management Areas for newly acquired lands is consistent with the management direction, goals and objectives of the Forest Plan, which is consistent with the National Forest Management Act. The MA designation does not propose any specific actions, but it will not prevent future activities consistent with forest planning requirements at 36 CFR 219.8-11.

Based on the analysis presented in the EA and Finding of No Significant Impact, I have determined that this action will not have significant effects on the human environment



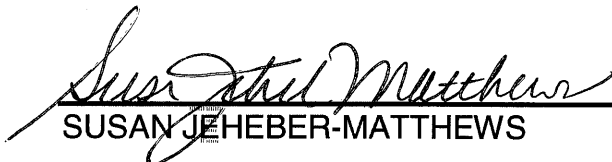
and, therefore, will not require preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Administrative Review and Implementation

Although we received three public comments during the project scoping period, none of these constituted a "substantive formal comment" as defined by 36 CFR 219.62. Therefore, my decision is not subject to the objection procedures in 36 CFR 219 Sub-Part B (36 CFR 219.51(a)) and may be implemented immediately following the publication of a notice of decision in the Tallahassee Democrat newspaper.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Matthew Trager at mdtrager@fs.fed.us or by phone at (850) 523-8582.


SUSAN JEHEBER-MATTHEWS

Forest Supervisor

1-31-2014

Date

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